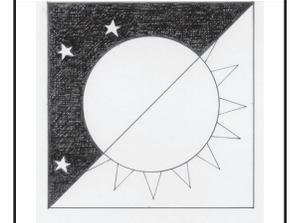
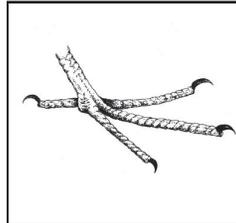
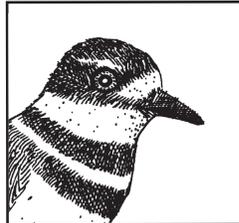
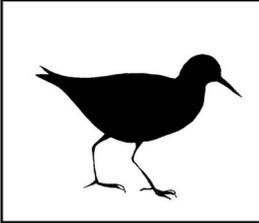




Plovers

Order Charadriiformes
Family Charadriidae



Plovers are wading birds that are built more compactly than other sandpipers with **shorter, thicker necks**. Their eyes are noticeably larger and their bills are shorter. When plovers move they run in **short bursts, then stop and freeze in place, and then run again**. You rarely see a plover walking calmly like other waders. They eat some plant matter, but mostly insects and crustaceans, especially marine crustaceans if they are a species that lives near a coast.



Killdeer

Charadrius vociferus



Normally we associate plovers with the beach. But **our most common plover, the killdeer, is most often seen on mowed, open parks, golf courses or even parking lots**. Killdeers are a lovely fawn-color on top with a creamy underside, **two black rings circling their neck and a red eye ring**. Their call is a high-pitched, urgent *kill-deer, kill-deer, kill-deer*, which can be heard during the day, while they are on the ground or flying, or even at night. . They are slender, lanky birds with long pointed wings and tail. When they burst into flight an **orange rump-patch** can clearly be seen.

The killdeer doesn't really build a **nest**. It is more like a **shallow depression scratched into bare ground**. About four well-camouflaged speckled eggs are laid directly on the ground. Sometimes the killdeer will place rocks, shells or sticks near the eggs, but the only real protection the eggs have are the adult killdeer. When the nest is threatened killdeers will go through an elaborate display to draw the intruder's attention away from their nest. Its called "**feigning**," and involves one of the adults making a verbal racket while **dragging a "broken wing" along the ground**. Once the intruder moves toward the "injured" adult, the birds quickly and safely takes flight. The chicks are precocial and can follow the adults to a slightly more protected area - often a marsh or stream - as soon as their feathers dry.

Plovers are another kind of shorebird. **Our best-known plover is the killdeer.** They really don't need to live near water. Instead they seek out large, mowed fields, golf courses, even parking lots and flat-topped buildings.

Killdeers are sharply marked with **two black rings** around a creamy white throat and belly, and **bright red eyes**. But their eggs are perfectly camouflaged to sit unnoticed on their **ground nests** (or sometimes on a flat roof top).

If the killdeer senses danger approaching, they put on a dramatic act to lure the predator away from their nest. Killdeer **"feign" an injury** like a broken wing and call "killdeer, killdeer, killdeer" in excited, high-pitched tones **to attract the attention of the predator.** It usually works since most predators would rather go after injured prey. Once the predator follows the "injured" killdeer away from its nest, the bird simply flies away – calling the whole time.

If you ever see this behavior, it probably means you have walked to close to a killdeer's nest.

A Simple Review of Plovers

